

The Globalization of Space

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9 ZOOHETEROTOPIAS

John Miller

The life and work of the Belgian zoologist Bernard Heuvelmans were notably unorthodox. Completing a doctorate on the teeth of the aardvark at the Free University of Brussels in 1939, he escaped four times from Nazi prisoner of war camps to make an unlikely living as a comedian and jazz singer in post-war Paris. It is his contribution to an esoteric branch of science, however, or perhaps more accurately pseudo-science, that constitutes his most prominent legacy. Heuvelmans' zoological interests, as they were to develop throughout a prolific writing career, were concentrated on forms of life at the margins of conventional natural history, beings, he explained, 'the existence of which is based only on testimonial or circumstantial evidence or on material proof judged insufficient by some'.¹ His research was painstaking, but dealing with animals more usually confined to the territory of the mythic and the fantastic inevitably placed him at a distance from institutional science. Perhaps unsurprisingly, he would never gain a formal university appointment. Nonetheless, he remained committed to the study of ambiguous animals (including, most famously, the yeti and the abominable snowman) and to the possible rediscovery of creatures 'universally thought to be extinct'² – dinosaurs, the mammoth and the New Zealand moa among others. By the time of his death in 2001 aged 84, Heuvelmans was widely honoured as the father of cryptozoology, a term he coined in the 1950s (although he later acknowledged that it had already been used by another creature seeker, the Scottish adventurer Ivan T. Sanderson).

If Heuvelmans' work received a measure of recognition, it was nowhere near the recognition he felt it deserved. Cryptozoology continued to be routinely scorned by the scientific establishment as the province of cranks, hobbyists and fraudsters; conversely, the scientific establishment was routinely condemned by cryptozoologists as narrow-mindedly attached to what Sanderson identified during an ill-tempered spat about Bigfoot in 1967 as a 'whole gamut of orthodoxies'³ that prevented the acceptance of Sasquatch *et al.*, even in the face of (to some observers) convincing evidence. Heuvelmans, accordingly, opens his 1955 book *On the Track of Unknown Animals* in combative mood:

Most zoologists are sceptical about the possibilities of discovering new species of large animals, but some of them do not, with legitimate scientific scepticism, keep an open mind until the species is proved to exist, but categorically deny that it can possibly do so until they have been forcibly proved wrong.⁴

For Heuvelmans, the taxonomic door is always already conspiratorially closed on a wide variety of animals that are extensively attested in anecdotal evidence. Such robust rhetoric reprises a tension, apparent since the nineteenth century, between professional men of science and unpaid enthusiasts (or, as Brian Regal puts it in the most significant academic study of cryptozoology to date, the antipathy between ‘eggheads’ and ‘crackpots’).⁵ Heuvelmans’ lament helps to construct a recurrent sense of the cryptozoologist as an enlightened but long-suffering maverick battling against a hidebound establishment. As Regal argues, Heuvelmans ‘established the trope of the free thinking, unfettered amateur monster hunter fighting against the dark forces of scientific mainstream conservatism’.⁶ Indignation is the characteristic tone of much cryptozoology; but cryptozoologists often also, it seems, relished their status as outsiders.

Notwithstanding Heuvelmans’ self-confidence, there are, undoubtedly, methodological problems in his work. Cryptozoology’s academic marginality is less to do with its central idea that many species are undescribed by science (which remains largely uncontroversial, although there are greater problems with the very large creatures cryptozoologists often prefer) and more to do with its specific focus on or attraction to less reliable forms of knowledge. Cryptids, as these lost creatures are known by aficionados (and also sometimes, evocatively from the French, *hauntiques*), are beasts of rumour, hearsay and legend. Heuvelmans trawled through travellers’ tales and journal articles looking for stories, hints even, of unexplained animal presences. A significant part of Heuvelmans’ scholarship is therefore textual; his work bestrides the zoological and the folkloric, forcing the two cultures into an uncomfortable intimacy, reimagining narrative as evidence.

Such a fascination with the traces of extra-zoological animals does at least have the benefit of a long history. What is *Beowulf*’s Grendel but a cryptid

*avant la lettre?*⁷ Mysterious animals have been an enduring part of literary tradition and Heuvelmans' work is entangled with literary sources and influences from its inception. It was apparently early readings of Jules Verne's *Twenty Thousand Leagues under the Sea* (1870) and Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* (1912) that encouraged his life-long enthusiasm for the secrets of natural history. Indeed, *On the Track of Unknown Animals* contains several pointed references to Conan Doyle and to *The Lost World*, in particular, which evidently remained something of an inspiration. 'I do not suggest', Heuvelmans concedes:

that we can hope to *emulate* Conan Doyle's *The Lost World*, in which Professor Challenger found on a [plateau] *all* the enormous reptiles from all parts of the world in the Mesozoic era and even some ape men. But it is absurd to insist that there can be *no* unknown animals in such little-known country.⁸

In a further consolidation of his literary credentials, as a friend of Georges Prosper Remi, better known as Hergé, Heuvelmans served as an advisor for many of the Tintin stories, perhaps most significantly feeding his expertise in Yeti myths into the 1960 *Tintin in Tibet*. Without the security of an academic day job, Heuvelmans relied on marketing his own books to a wide audience, clearly with a good deal of success. A *Daily Mail* review noted approvingly that 'Dr Heuvelmans' original research beats any alleged thriller for enthralling excitement'.⁹ His voluminous cryptozoological output, therefore, necessarily nourishes rather than shies away from the imaginative potency of mythical and semi-mythical beasts. The beleaguered Heuvelmans' determination to be taken seriously as a naturalist was always uncomfortably entwined with his interest in and contribution to a literature of the fantastic.

Importantly, Heuvelmans's attempted formalization of cryptozoology as an academic discipline in the 1950s emerges in the wake of a period of remarkable super-abundance for mythical creatures in the last decades of the nineteenth century and the first of the twentieth, an era which provides many of the keystone species of the extra-zoological imagination: not just Conan Doyle's dinosaurs in *The Lost World*, but Edgar Rice Burroughs'

prehistoric fantasy *The Land that Time Forgot* (1918); also, of course, the most famous cryptid of them all, *King Kong* (1933). These outsized beasts have evoked an ever-expanding repertoire of symbolic or allegorical interpretations, as if their hyperbolic bodies require the hyperbolic literary critical practice that Roger Luckhurst identifies as ‘monstrous over-reading’.¹⁰ Psychoanalysis, in particular, dogs the cryptid’s footsteps; monsters, as Regal flamboyantly asserts at the opening of his book, ‘have stalked the dark parts of the human psyche, as well as forests, for millennia’.¹¹ But as much as cryptozoology and its explicitly fictional avatars suggest the purely fantastic, they may also be read in materialist terms as a response to environmental history; as part of a discourse of animals, and more specifically, animal habitats that emerges in the context of industrial and imperial modernity.

The lost worlds of the *hauntiques* function, I will argue, as zooheterotopias, territories which comprise, as Foucault explains his conception of heterotopia, ‘a simultaneously mythic and real contestation of the space in which we live’.¹² These uncanny spaces exist (if that is the right word) outside familiar, regulated geographies and generate a particular affective experience that reflects back onto and adjusts understandings of all other sites. Specifically, zooheterotopias reveal the complex involvements of global capital with the ecological imagination and function in terms of a paradox. On the one hand, these habitats articulate the desire for spaces ungraspable by capital, for animal life beyond the reach of imperial modernity; on the other, it is the very ‘outside’ of capital that drives the urge to representation and appropriates this ‘beyond’ into the ideological regime it appears to contest. Cryptozoology, therefore, emerges as a point of tension between the possibilities of a radical environmentalism and the disappearance of conservation into economic imperatives. The central purpose of this analysis is to utilize Foucault’s thought as a contribution to a self-critical environmentalism that remains vigilant of the historical intimacies between ecological discourses and discourses of global capital.

Blank Spaces/Lost Worlds

It has been consistently noted that Foucault's oeuvre contains little or nothing in the way of an explicit environmentalist or pro-animal focus. As Chloë Taylor contends, the 'few times that Foucault discussed animality or human-animal relations, animals and animality remained metaphors for humans and human experiences'.¹³ Nonetheless, his work has proved influential in the formation of critical fields committed to unravelling the logics and strategies of human domination in a period of ecological crisis, most notably, as Sara Rinfret argues, through 'three key concepts – disciplinary power, governmentality and biopolitics'.¹⁴ The conception of the heterotopia is also one with clear, if implicit, ecological resonance. Foucault's contention in the opening paragraph of 'On Other Spaces' that the 'present epoch will perhaps be above all the epoch of space' has the ring of self-evidence for environmentalists. There can be no thinking about ecology, about life forms, their interactions and the forces that shape these, without thinking about the spaces in which these interrelations unfold and necessarily, therefore, about the processes (both material and discursive) that produce, modify and reproduce these spaces. Given the way in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (continuing processes initiated in the eighteenth century if not before) that ecological conditions are determined by economic considerations (especially in the current age of 'biodiversity offsetting' and 'ecosystem services'), Foucault's insight might now be refined: our present epoch is above all the epoch of space in relation to capital.

The movement to safeguard key areas of biodiversity is by now a well-established, if intermittently successful, aspect of green campaigning and appears (in part) as an ongoing battle against the priorities of corporate interests in a time of resource scarcity. Historically, the development of environmentalism as a spatial discourse reaches a particular intensity at the start of the twentieth century with the enthusiastic designation of national parks in response to the unrestrained environmental excesses of the Victorian period (especially in terms of over-hunting and the development of large-scale colonial agriculture). Conservation is based to a large extent in the administration of natural habitats in order to prevent and redress unrestricted development and as such often depends upon an ecological bureaucratization of territory that increasingly involves a biopolitical assessment of animals as populations to be managed. As much as

conservation involves a contestation of the commercial exploitation of habitats, it has also emerged as itself an economic discourse, most recently through the formation of ‘natural capital’ as an incipient mechanism for attaching value to nature, and before that through the arrival of ‘sustainable development’ as a means of incorporating an environmental perspective into the goals of global capitalism. It is clearly an oversimplification, therefore, to think of environmentalism (a phenomenon that itself includes multiple ideological persuasions) in direct opposition to capitalism. Ultimately, there can hardly be a more vital, or intractable, political question at the start of the twenty-first century than the vexed relationship between the economic and the ecological.

For all its scientific marginality, cryptozoology offers a useful lens on the way that economic and ecological discourses come to be entwined in the first half of the twentieth century. Cryptozoology too is inextricably connected to questions of space, and also (though less obviously) to questions of capital. It exists, in Marlowe’s famous phrase from Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, in a ‘blank space of delightful mystery – a white patch for a boy to dream gloriously over’;¹⁵ as much a discourse of geography as it is a discourse of species. The search for lost or undiscovered animals hypothesizes not just a state of zoological possibility, but also, connectedly, insists on the endurance of fantastic habitats beyond the reach of natural historical orthodoxy. Given cryptozoology’s specific focus on megafauna, the question of habitat is notably accentuated: if dinosaurs still roam the earth, where have they been hiding? Accordingly, Heuvelmans’ chapter titles in *On the Track of Unknown Animals* routinely announce both creatures and territories: ‘Nittaevo, the Lost People of Ceylon’, ‘Orang Pendek, the Ape Man of Sumatra’. At the moment when it seems the world’s secrets have been exhausted, cryptozoology posits some secluded cave, remote forest or neglected island where a few last specimens have miraculously evaded the reach of science. In a section on the New Zealand moa, Heuvelmans quotes the nineteenth-century German geologist Ferdinand von Hochstetter’s suggestive summary of the quintessential territories of the last survivors: ‘It is by no means impossible that in *lonely and inaccessible places* live a few scarce diehards of the giant family’.¹⁶ Cryptozoology flies in the face of a widespread supposition that the world’s

last secrets are gone forever. ‘There are lost worlds everywhere’, Heuvelmans avers in the title of the opening chapter of *On the Track of Unknown Animals*. In a period when the world appears to have become thoroughly known (in part through the development of conservation and the ever extending reach of natural history expeditions), cryptozoology insists on an enduring epistemological lack. ‘The world’, for Heuvelmans, ‘is by no means thoroughly explained’.¹⁷ Cryptozoology, then, may be understood both as a response to the totalizing effects of modernity and as an intriguingly resistant discourse.

There is more than coincidence to the increasing fascination with cryptids during the years that saw the formalization of national parks in the first decades of the twentieth century. Wilderness is no longer a glorious blank space; the production of habitats as objects of knowledge contributes to the emergence of a tone of mourning that is a consistent note in cryptozoological fictions. As the newspaper editor McArdle laments before the adventurers set sail for South America in *The Lost World*, ‘The big blank spaces in the map are all being filled in and there’s no room for romance anywhere’.¹⁸ These lines both echo Conrad’s and anticipate the conclusion of another Victorian and Edwardian novelist whose work abounds with cryptids, Henry Rider Haggard. Haggard is most notable in the annals of cryptozoology for his tales of lost gorilla gods in two later novels *The Holy Flower* (1917) and *Heu-Heu* (1924), which influenced Merian C. Cooper’s and Edgar Wallace’s development of *King Kong*. Writing in his autobiography, *The Days of My Life*, Haggard poignantly announces that ‘with all the world explored and exhausted, I feel sorry for the romance writers of the future, for I know not whither they will turn’.¹⁹ (London: Longmans, 1926), vol. 2, p. 91. For both Haggard and Conan Doyle, the start of the twentieth century is marked by a global aesthetic impoverishment produced in part by habitat loss (deforestation, urbanization and the rise of big agriculture – the usual suspects of environmental degradation) and in part also by the development of conservation as a practice of land management. The modern world is shorn of romance, there is no longer a ‘secret place’, as Haggard puts it elsewhere, ‘unknown to the pestilent accuracy of the geographer’ in which writers can ‘lay their plots’.²⁰ Such a longing for romantic literary territory

stimulates a consistent note of anti-materialism in the work of Haggard and others as adventure comes to require a wilderness untouched by commerce.²¹

Cryptozoology, then, is part of a yearning for romance and as such is intimately involved with loss, a connection that surrounds it with a notable irony. For all the commitment of enthusiasts like Heuvelmans, cryptozoology retains a specific investment in its own failure. As soon as a cryptid is found, it stops being a cryptid; the fascination of its secrecy is ruined by discovery. If the aim of cryptozoology is to bring secret creatures to light, there remains paradoxically an aesthetic frisson in their concealment. For all Heuvelmans' desire to taxonomize the yeti (*Dinanthropoides nivalis*, though it has never caught on), cryptozoology is structured around what might be thought of as an anti-taxonomy. It is the study of the unknown, even the unknowable that drives the quest for the *hauntique*. The term cryptozoology itself, etymologically, refers to the study of *hidden* animals. The cryptid is condemned to exist perpetually in the moment before revelation. Its natural habitat, so to speak, is the blurry photograph or shaky amateur film, premised on images which often could be anything: undiscovered species, a disguised human form or any number of discarded household objects. As an enterprise at the edge of orthodox academic practice, cryptozoology itself, like the animals it studies, evades plain visibility. Researching cryptozoology today is a tale of abandoned websites, broken links and defunct journals. The International Society of Cryptozoology was founded in 1982, but became extinct in 1996, as did its journal *Cryptozoology*.²² It seems as if this nonconformist undertaking is unwittingly performing the kind of breakdown in or dereliction of the structures of modernity that might allow unexpected animals to retain a tenuous foothold. Both the forms and the content of cryptozoology are useful, then, in unpacking its seductive mythology of lost and hidden worlds.

To appreciate more fully the ways in which cryptozoology functions as a form of conflicted ecological imaginary, three of the six principles of heterotopia that Foucault outlines in 'Of Other Spaces' are particularly pertinent. Firstly, I consider Foucault's fourth principle: 'Heterotopias are most often linked to slices in time ... The heterotopia begins to function at

full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time'.²³ My next zooheterotopic principle emerges from Foucault's fifth, that 'heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening or closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable'.²⁴ Lastly, I turn to Foucault's final principle: that heterotopias 'have a function in relation to all the space that remains'.²⁵ In order to illustrate the operation of these principles, I examine two definitive cryptid fictions that form a central part of the early twentieth-century proliferation of extra-zoological creatures crucial to the more serious academic work of Heuvelmans and others: firstly (and perhaps unavoidably) Conan Doyle's *The Lost World*; secondly, *King Kong*, both in Edgar Wallace and Merian C. Cooper's 1933 film and, more thoroughly, Delos W. Lovelace novelization (which unusually was released before the movie in 1932).²⁶

Principle I: Heterochronies, or the Lands that Time Forgot

As much as cryptozoology is a discourse of space, it is also, connectedly, a discourse of time; or rather, more specifically, it is a particular sense of temporality that constitutes the spatiality, and vice versa. A location's geographical distance from the metropolitan centres of global capitalism allows for the possibility of an alternative relationship to global history. These are, to allude again to Edgar Rice Burroughs' famed story, the lands that time forgot: spaces that evade progress and modernity to offer a glimpse back into an ecology before the expansion of capital and taxonomy across the planet. Characteristically, in response to the spatial anxieties identified by Haggard and others, the cryptozoological adventure takes its heroes off the map and into a surviving area of blank space. The object of Professor Challenger's interest in *The Lost World* is an 'entirely uncharted' region of the 'partially explored' Amazon (p. 28). Likewise, as the crew of the 'moving picture ship' anxiously ponder their destination in Lovelace's neglected novelization of *King Kong*, the Hollywood filmmaker Carl Denham comments 'You won't find that island on any chart'.²⁷ The mysterious interior and the undiscovered island are perhaps the two most common spatial motifs of cryptozoological fiction, but there are other more

flamboyant geographical premises too in related texts. Jules Verne's *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* (1864) as well as *The Land that Time Forgot* favour the epic literary device of katabasis, as the heroes descend into subterranean worlds that take them away from the world's mapped surface.²⁸ Such concealment routinely constructs a certain a-historicity; these are places where history has failed to happen.

The obsession with dinosaurs in cryptozoology and cryptid fictions serves as the exemplary sign of this breaking with chronology, of the stepping out of history into an era characterized, consistently, as the prehistoric. *King Kong*, not a text of course concerned primarily with dinosaurs, throws a handful in for good measure as the paradigmatic emblems of the space of the long before; as Lovelace describes, as a sign of the 'true scope of the island's mystery'.²⁹ 'Why shouldn't such an out-of-the-way spot', he asks, 'be just the place to find a solitary surviving prehistoric freak?',³⁰ a point reiterated throughout the text as Kong is understood immediately as 'prehistoric life' and a 'primitive survival'.³¹ It is worth recalling that in a standard gesture of imperial fictions, human populations are also routinely located on a temporal axis; the sound of drums that greets the adventurers arrival on the mysterious Skull Island appear as 'the sound primitive hands might beat out in order to make easier for primitive minds the hard business of thinking'.³² The film's racial suppositions are, of course, well known; the half-naked islanders (some in war paint, some dressed as gorillas) are blunt stereotypes of a generic cultural backwardness and the initial visual signature of the pre-modern world. Where the people are primitive, the logic runs, the wildlife will be too.

The Lost World goes even further back into a supposed human evolutionary past with the strange 'ape-men' that beset Professor Challenger and his crew on their South American plateau. Malone's first encounter with one of these unsettling beasts sees him linger over the Neanderthal features with an anthropologist's eye:

It was a human face – or at least it was far more human than any monkey's that I have ever seen. It was long, whitish, and blotched with pimples, the nose flattened, and the lower jaw projecting, with a

bristle of coarse whiskers round the chin. The eyes, which were under thick and heavy brows, were bestial and ferocious, and as it opened its mouth to snarl what sounded like a curse at me I observed that it had curved, sharp canine teeth³³

Conan Doyle carefully constructs the ape as the proto-human, its face and voice just beneath what could be recognized as *Homo sapiens*, the 'thick and heavy brows' capturing the popular image of emerging man. The movement through space from the metropolitan centre to the colonial periphery that formulaically characterizes the opening chapters of cryptozoological fictions is very obviously, then, conceived as a movement into the past.³⁴ The representation of primitive cultures precisely captures Foucault's sense of the temporal dimensions of heterotopia; the functioning of heterotopia as heterochrony: 'as if the entire history of humanity reaching back to its origin were accessible in a sort of immediate knowledge'.³⁵

Evidently, the motif of the prehistoric enclave serves a clear ideological function in the context of late imperialism, and one that is too widely recognized to be worth recounting here. Reading these texts ecologically, however, as texts concerned (however fantastically) with animal life does produce a degree of tension. For all the privileging of the modern West against its barbarian others, the *hauntique* and the landscape it inhabits is routinely expressed as an object of desire. There can be no more enticing lure to adventure than the prospect of a mythical beast. This lure, of course, has many aspects. Challenger's imperative to visit the Jurassic monsters in their 'secret haunts' in South America is framed as an attempt to recover his academic reputation in the face of the cryptozoological staple of a doubtful establishment. His companions embody a portfolio of other motivations; for Malone, it is the chance to win the heart of the impossible-to-please Gladys with her demand for 'a man of great deeds and strange experiences'.³⁶ The aristocratic adventurer, Lord John Roxton, on the other hand, is drawn to the prospect of the 'great wastelands and the wide spaces' of the Amazon.³⁷

Following Roxton's ecologically resonant perspective, the text's most prominent initial construction of desire is based in an environmental aesthetics that Malone's narration draws consistent attention to, particularly

in the first days of their South American sojourn. How, Malone asks as he surveys the glorious Amazonian vista, 'shall I ever forget the solemn mystery of it?' What follows is a deliberately (even stereotypically) romanticized evocation of the colonial landscape that insists on the aesthetic value of the world out of (Western) time:

The height of the trees and the thickness of the boles exceeded anything which I in my town-bred life could have imagined, shooting upwards in magnificent columns until, at an enormous distance above our heads, we could dimly discern the spot where they threw out their side-branches into Gothic upward curves which coalesced to form one great matted roof of verdure, through which only an occasional golden ray of sunshine shot downwards to trace a thin dazzling line of light amidst the majestic obscurity. As we walked noiselessly amid the thick, soft carpet of decaying vegetation the hush fell upon our souls which comes upon us in the twilight of the Abbey, and even Professor Challenger's full-chested notes sank into a whisper.³⁸

The reverent tone of Conan Doyle's writing revolves to a large extent around a sense of environmental nostalgia. Malone's recollection of his 'town-bred life' is the key structural point in the purple prose that follows; the aesthetic appreciation of the South American wilderness appears in contrast to the restricted urban world the novel begins in. The movement away from the metropolitan centre to the colonial wilds is constructed as a spiritual experience; 'even' the unsentimental Challenger is not immune to the hush that falls on the adventurers' souls. Entering the world before industrial development therefore involves an environmentalist (or proto-environmentalist) sensibility that identifies the pre-colonial wilderness as the home of a deep affective experience. Animal life features as a central ingredient of this landscape aesthetics as part of the mourned fullness of primordial nature. 'Once', Malone records, 'some bandy-legged, lurching creature, an ant-eater or bear scuttled clumsily amid the shadows'.³⁹ The indeterminate beast completes the scene, the uncertainty of its designation adding to the ecological ambience of a land that both exceeds and precedes the human; its scuttling movement among the shadows recalling the

cryptozoological fixation with what cannot be clearly seen. Here, the world, exhausted by modernity, seems to flourish again.

If one key note of these cryptozoological fictions is the discovery of a nature that lifts the adventurer's heart, another equally recurrent dimension, somewhat paradoxically, is the presence of horror, an experience that extends beyond the straightforward physical terror that inheres in encounters with large, aggressive predators. It is not just the threat of the cryptid, but the *idea* of them that alarms the adventurer. For all the heroes' desire to uncover the plateau's lost creatures, as soon as they do, they wish they hadn't. Prehistoric life, above all, is slimy and disquieting, most notably in *The Lost World* when Challenger and his team meet with a 'rookery of pterodactyls':

There were hundreds of them congregated within view. All the bottom area round the water-edge was alive with their young ones, and with hideous mothers brooding upon their leathery, yellowish eggs. From this crawling flapping mass of obscene reptilian life came the shocking clamour which filled the air and the mephitic, horrible, musty odour which turned us sick. But above, perched each upon its own stone, tall, gray, and withered, more like dead and dried specimens than actual living creatures, sat the horrible males, absolutely motionless save for the rolling of their red eyes or an occasional snap of their rat-trap beaks as a dragon-fly went past them.⁴⁰

Malone's evocation of reptilian obscenity evidently constructs a wholly different atmosphere from his earlier experience of this zooheterotopia; his visceral reaction as he sickens in the company of these living fossils craves for the sanitizing sweep of imperial modernity to fight off the ontological vertigo the pterodactyls produce. Such 'filthy creatures'⁴¹ demand violence and, sure enough, shortly afterwards the forest resounds with the reassuringly modern 'crash of Lord John's elephant gun' and a pterodactyl is discovered with a broken wing 'spitting and gurgling ... with a wide-opened beak and blood-shot, goggled eyes, like some devil in a medieval picture'.⁴² The entry into prehistory is ultimately a compromised experience, as if there is only so far back you can go before modernity (initially bemoaned) entices

you back. Prehistoric life (the embodiment of what we might term zooheterochrony) is a site of both environmental nostalgia and profound ontological discomfort, and as such, of a profound ambivalence.⁴³

Principle II: Opening/Closing; Isolation/Penetration

The interplay between desire and disgust in *The Lost World* illustrates the significance of cusps and transitions between contrasting zones of experience, an aspect of zooheterotopias that is recurrently condensed into the image of the portal or gate. Evidently, as Foucault explains his fifth principle, 'the heterotopic site is not freely accessible like a public space'.⁴⁴ As we have seen, it is the quality of being somehow cordoned off, removed or restricted that constitutes the (zoo) heterotopia. Foucault's description of the 'system of opening and closing that both isolates [heterotopias] and makes them penetrable' is pertinent to cryptozoology not just because of the geographical inaccessibility of the cryptid's home, but also because of a kind of ritual that appears to govern the entry of the cryptozoological adventurer into these set-apart places. Through these, zooheterotopias, as much as they associate capitalist modernity with imaginative and aesthetic loss, are also embroiled in a masculinist identity politics inseparable from imperial ideologies.

To continue with *The Lost World*, at the outset of his heroes' adventure, Conan Doyle constructs an elaborate narrative structure of obstruction and penetration that insists on the closure of the secret domain, but which in doing so provides the clue to its opening. As Professor Challenger explains as the men approach the plateau:

the secret opening is half a mile onwards upon the other side of the river. There is no break in the trees. That is the wonder and mystery of it. There where you see light-green rushes instead of dark-green undergrowth, there between the great cotton woods, that is my private gate into the unknown. Push through and you will understand.⁴⁵

The concealed gap in the undergrowth (the first of several portals the heroes have to negotiate in the novel) is a well-established literary device; the same

basic premise, indeed, as the wardrobe in C. S. Lewis's Narnia stories from the 1950s. Clearly, the primary function of such portals is to emphasize the destination as a place beyond and constitute the world's 'lostness'. These are the geographical curiosities that allow rare and fantastic species to flourish, a premise that makes sound ecological sense. As Darwin found in the Galapagos, geographical isolation is of profound ecological significance in the evolution of distinct evolutionary forms. Immediately, animal life beyond Challenger's 'private gate' is more plentiful: monkeys, tapirs and a puma appear along a stretch of water in which '[b]ird life was abundant'.⁴⁶ Whatever is 'unknown' is automatically understood as ecologically flourishing, as if the act of knowing is itself a violent act that reduces biodiversity. Most significantly, the 'deep peace of this strange waterway was unbroken by any sign of man'.⁴⁷ The gap in the undergrowth is the portal between the human world and the more-than-human world beyond. Importantly, access is restricted to a privileged few; as Foucault suggests, 'To get in one must have a certain permission and make certain gestures'.⁴⁸ The image of a 'private gate' recalls Challenger's wariness of visitors to his house earlier in the novel (resulting in Malone's unceremonious eviction from the premises) and indicates the importance of exclusion as an aspect of concealment, a motif that forms a central part of the imperialist dimensions of such texts. Even before a formal incursion into the territory, Challenger's remark lays down a marker of sovereignty. The gate (and implicitly the land beyond) is his own domain, beyond the reach of other visitors.

Importantly, not everyone will be proved fit to traverse the gate and enter the interior. This restriction produces a particular narrative experience of the threshold that evidently provides a good deal of the text's early excitement as the dauntless, hardy explorer ritualistically proves himself by fighting his way in. *King Kong's* gate into the unknown is altogether a clearer obstacle than that of *The Lost World*. Skull Island is protected by the 'mighty barrier' of a wall in which 'there seemed to be a gate hinged to massive stone pillars' that Denham and his crew can only reach by traversing a 'tortuous passageway'.⁴⁹ Such a proliferation of impediments creates the impression that the island's interior will be 'impregnable',⁵⁰ though inevitably the story's narrative drive is structured around the dramatic penetration of this

barrier. Crossing the portal in *King Kong* is given an extra ideological dimension by the kidnap of the blonde starlet Ann Darrow (Fay Wray) that demands the adventurers' intervention to save her from a dire fate at the hands (paws?) of the beast-God Kong. *King Kong* is noteworthy for the games it plays with the extension of desire across categories of difference (species most obviously, but also, implicitly, race); but what is important in terms of its operation as a zooheterotopia is the containment of the act of territorial penetration within a masculinist and heteronormative context. Consequently, while the cryptozoological fantasy of habitats out-of-time articulates a resistance to the effects of imperial capital, the trope of the threshold reveals an ideological and aesthetic investment in what you might think of as its causes: a dominatory sensibility that also, of course, demands the destruction of the monsters on the threshold's other side.

After recounting Kong's retreat back into the island's interior with his terrified human prize, Lovelace turns in a new chapter to the frantic quest to retrieve her:

It had been Denham who raced the rescue boats away from the Wanderer; and Denham who had deployed the sailors for the breathless run to the village. But from the moment the great gate swung open Driscoll took charge. It was Driscoll who organised the pursuit after Kong.⁵¹

As the director and first mate set off on their desperate mission, Lovelace insists on the military decisiveness of the two men as the sailors are 'deployed' and the pursuit 'organised'. Shortly afterwards, Driscoll and Denham are described inspecting 'guns, ammunition and flashlights'⁵² as their penetration of the zooheterotopic threshold is structured around stock images of masculine accomplishment. Importantly, the gate effects a sudden shift in the hierarchical structure of the pursuit as Driscoll immediately takes charge, transformed from first mate to leader on the other side of the threshold. The centrality of the love interest between Ann and Driscoll in *King Kong* (in contrast to its marginality in *The Lost World*) reaffirms the rather Darwinian stakes of the enterprise: kill the beast and get the girl.⁵³ The zooheterotopia, therefore, becomes less a discourse of the other and

more a discourse of the self in the face of the other. Nostalgia for the lost world of the *hauntique* is the occasion for the triumph of modernity over the past through the determination of its reach into the world's furthest corners. The function of the portal as the site of heroic self-assertion (a trope also apparent in the latter stages of Conan Doyle's narrative) adds a strikingly normative element to the cryptozoological fixation with the beyond. That which is set-apart from capitalist modernity is useful for the opportunity it provides to showcase the macho prowess of the adventurous hero as the lost habitat appears as a space in which to reconstruct a pioneer sensibility ostensibly fading in the modern world. What this second function of the zooheterotopia confirms, then, is a well-remarked convergence of what may appear to be an environmentalist aesthetic with the history of empire.⁵⁴

Principle III: Zooheterotopia/Globalization

The function that Foucault concludes with, that 'heterotopias have a function in relation to all the space that remains' evokes a state of hyper-connectedness characteristic of what today would most commonly be identified as globalization. In part, the zooheterotopia fits with Foucault's discussion the heterotopia of 'compensation',⁵⁵ specifically in the way that the cryptid's abundant and mysterious world responds to the imaginative and ecological lack of industrial modernity. But the function of relation characteristic of *The Lost World* and *King Kong* is determined more prominently and consistently by an economic imperative to render the cryptid visible. The zooheterotopia cannot remain secluded, its threshold must be traversed and, most importantly, its denizens must be returned to the imperial metropolis in order to be fully integrated into the capitalist world system. The cryptid must be brought 'home'. For all the formulaic inevitability of this narrative pattern, there is, nonetheless, a degree of uncertainty to the way in which the cryptid's return operates as a sign of incipient globalization with all the ecological consequences that carries. Ultimately, it is precisely the texts' representation of the cryptid's resistance to commodification that illustrates what is most important about cryptozoology's contribution to an ecological imaginary in the era of global

capital; namely, the way that ecological thinking can be incorporated (albeit uneasily) into global capital.

As been pointed out by a number of critics, the adventures of both *The Lost World* and *King Kong* are framed by economic discourses. In *The Lost World*, the introduction of capital is rather subtle, or at least more subtle than in *King Kong*. The novel begins with a knowingly dry reflection on 'bimetallism' as the father of Malone's beloved Gladys embarks on a 'monotonous chirrup about bad money driving out good, the token value of silver, the depreciation of the rupee, and the true standards of exchange'.⁵⁶ Such humdrum reflections are evidently gauged to be in stark contrast to the excitement that follows. They are significant nonetheless for their foregrounding of an economic context. As Ross. G. Forman has argued, the framing conversation about markets is inextricably connected to the novel's intertextual relations: *The Lost World* 'follows adventure conventions by encoding crucial economic allegories in fictional discourse'.⁵⁷ Moreover, the novel ends with the image of a 'beautiful glittering diamond' extracted from the secret plateau that invites the adventurers back to South America to claim their full rewards as imperial entrepreneurs. Once discovered, the cryptozoological habitat must be instrumentally utilized.

The economic agenda of *King Kong* is even more immediately striking. Kong exists from the start to be monetarized in the developing movie industry that the text is metafictionally based around. Set in the midst of the great depression, the story begins in grinding poverty with the down-on-her-luck starlet-to-be Darrow caught stealing an apple and redeemed from prosecution from the director Denham who pays off the shop proprietor. The quest for Kong is always concerned, then, with questions of livelihood. Accordingly, an economic dimension of the quest for Kong is signalled repeatedly in the narrative's early stages. The theatrical agent Weston emerges from a cab 'hanging tightly to his money'.⁵⁸ and the question of how much the movie will gross is a central part of planning discussions.⁵⁹ Most obvious is Denham's over-excited exclamation in the film after Darrow is rescued from the beast: 'we've found something worth more than all the movies in the world'. Kong, as Lovelace has a tabloid photographer remark, is a 'gold mine'.⁶⁰

Both texts, therefore, require us to understand the hunt for the cryptid as fundamentally engaged with an economic logic.⁶¹ Before the adventurers' destinations are reached, Skull Island and Conan Doyle's South American plateau are already understood to be connected to all other sites through the profit motive, though it would be an oversimplification to think of either text as straightforwardly complicit with the advance of global capital. As Barbara Creed observes 'New York is represented as an uncanny modern urban jungle in which greed is the ruling principle'.⁶² Lovelace's novel provides notable evidence of the irony that surrounds Kong's final commodification in a New York theatre, trussed up for the audience's edification. If Kong has disappeared into consumer culture, then so have the gathering throng looking for their hit of the spectacular. Waiting for the curtain to reveal the sensational gorilla, the crowd are reduced to metonym: a '\$3.98 pick-me-up frock' converses with a 'Bronx Derby' while a 'Paris Gown' condemns them as a 'rabble' to the chagrin of a 'Riverside Drive tipbrim'.⁶³ Lovelace's exposure of class inequalities that emerge in a society governed by consumption clearly adds a political edge to the drive to total commodification that the quest for Kong appears to represent. The narrative's setting against the background of the great depression does, moreover, remind us of one of the great, periodic failures of capitalism.

A certain discomfort with economic drives is apparent in the story's poignant conclusion. Kong's escape from the theatre is based not just on his saccharine love for Darrow, but also on his immediate and visceral resistance to the waves of flash photography that greet his unveiling. There is perhaps a slight biblical resonance to Lovelace's presentation of this climactic moment. Twice the 'blinding glare' of the photographers' cameras fills the stage before Kong's rage brings the situation to crisis point:

The white glare flashed across the stage a third time. Kong opened his mouth and roared from deep in his chest. As Driscoll swung an arm protectingly around Ann the captive beast-god struggled furiously. His rage was a wild and cataclysmic emotion which surged from his inmost being.⁶⁴

Lovelace's insistence on the three flashes emphasizes Kong's role as a sacrificial, even (at the risk of monstrous over-reading) a Messianic figure, recalling Peter's denial of Christ three times, before Kong is finally laid low clinging to the Empire State Building, that unmistakable emblem of capitalist bravado.⁶⁵ Reading Kong as ape-Christ is perhaps going too far, but his rebellion and then fall from grace clearly overthrow his potential as a 'gold mine'; the narrative experience of his defeat revolves around the tragic sense of his 'inmost being' that refuses the apparent logic of a total commodification. Kong, the great cryptozoological icon is, finally, more than his image. Consequently, it is the relation of Skull Island to all other sites that is the most fundamental and ambivalent aspect of its zooheterotopic function. The demand for the economic use of a being whose value is constituted by his exteriority to economic use results in the paradox of wanting something and not wanting it at the same time.

The Lost World presents a rather different resolution to the cryptid's 'return' to the metropolis. Here, a pterodactyl is brought back to London to be exhibited before an incredulous public in the heart of the commercial city. Its inevitable escape, 'squeezing its hideous bulk' through an open window represents the novel's narrative climax, though its fate is ultimately more ambiguous than Kong's. 'Nothing can be said to be certain upon this point', Malone concludes of the monster's fate, before giving one final, vague suggestion:

The only other evidence which I can adduce is from the log of the SS. Friesland, a Dutch-American liner, which asserts that at nine next morning, Start Point being at the time ten miles upon their starboard quarter, they were passed by something between a flying goat and a monstrous bat, which was heading at a prodigious pace south and west. If its homing instinct led it upon the right line, there can be no doubt that somewhere out in the wastes of the Atlantic the last European pterodactyl found its end.⁶⁶

For all the novel's determination to incorporate the lost plateau into imperial capital, like Kong, the forlornly homing pterodactyl is a poignant figure. As Forman argues, '*The Lost World* converts the monster into the imperial

victim, not the victimizer'.⁶⁷ Conan Doyle's reinsertion of the pterodactyl into the epistemological lack that allows cryptozoology's sense of possibility, leaves us back where we started. Who knows if the monster isn't lingering somewhere in the 'wastes of the Atlantic'? The economic drive that brings the zooheterotopia into contact with all other sites must always, it seems, be incomplete; the effects of capital always appear in suspension or under denial.

Both these texts, then, and cryptozoology more broadly, serve to imaginatively construct the limits of capital in relation to animals and their dwindling habitats. Ironically, it is the imagination of the limits of capital that appears to drive its forward momentum. Foucault's enigmatic final sentence in 'Of Other Spaces' offers a parting reflection on the way that heterotopias are involved with the imagination when he turns to ships as heterotopias *par excellence*, and the 'greatest reserve of the imagination'. 'In civilisations without boats', Foucault contends, 'dreams dry up, espionage takes the place of adventure and the police take the place of pirates'.⁶⁸ Foucault signals a spatial imaginary as a counter hegemonic force; to be out of the way is to be located at a remove from normative ideology in a space that allows us to reimagine the world and, potentially, our relations with other creatures. This might seem to allow for an optimistic conclusion to the role of the zooheterotopic imagination in revivifying ecological energies in an era of crisis. Any optimism must be necessarily cautious, however. *The Lost World* and *King Kong* ultimately revolve around the capitalist logic of scarcity: whatever is lost, singular, secret or unobtainable reaches the status of a kind of super-commodity. To follow Conan Doyle's logic: when a monster is lost, it must be found again; once it is found, it must be lost again, if only to raise the prospect that it might once more be found. What this leaves us with is the sense of the emotional and political complexity of the cryptozoological habitat. The very act of bemoaning the effects of capitalist modernity becomes in turn another *part* of capitalist modernity as part of a fantasy of infinitely continuing possibility at odds with the material grounding of finite planetary life.